RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

Year One Report

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

May 4, 2012

U.S. Department of Education
Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education

Office of the Deputy Secretary
Anthony W. Miller
Deputy Secretary

Implementation and Support Unit
Ann Whalen
Director, Policy and Program Implementation

May 2012

This publication is available on the Department's website at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/performance.html.

On request, this publication is available in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print or compact disc. For more information, please contact the Department's Alternate Format Center at 202-260-0852 or at 202-260-0818.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Race to the Top Assessment program was authorized as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). In September 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded competitive, four-year grants to two consortia of states, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced).[1]

The two consortia are developing comprehensive assessment systems that are valid, support and inform instruction, provide accurate information about what students know and can do, and measure student achievement against standards, including those that are typically hard to measure, designed to ensure that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and the workplace. The assessment systems must include one or more summative assessment components in mathematics and in English language arts that are administered at least once during the academic year in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in high school; both consortia are also creating a series of diagnostic, formative, or interim tests that will be available for their member states to provide ongoing feedback during the school year to inform teaching and learning. The assessments must accessible to all students, including English learners and students with disabilities. PARCC and Smarter Balanced will each develop a common measure for use by their member states of whether individual students are college- and career-ready or on track to being college- and career-ready. The assessment systems will provide an accurate measure of student achievement, particularly for very high- and low-achieving students, and an accurate measure of student growth over a full academic year or course.

These assessment systems, which will be operational in the 2014-2015 school year, are intended to play a critical support role in educational systems; provide administrators, educators, parents, and students with the data and information needed to continuously improve teaching and learning; and help meet the President's goal of restoring, by 2020, the nation's position as the world leader in college graduates.

RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT PROGRAM REVIEW

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting states as they implement ambitious reform, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top Assessment program. The goal of the ISU is to provide collaborative support to grantees as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. By building true partnerships with grantees, the ISU moves beyond a compliance-based monitoring structure while maintaining high expectations for results.

Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top Assessment program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is designed to identify areas in which the consortia need assistance and support to meet their goals. The ISU works with the Race to the Top Assessment consortia to identify and provide support based on their specific plans and needs. ISU staff encourages collaboration and partnership across the consortia and with outside experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes.
The consortia are accountable for implementing their approved Race to the Top Assessment plans. The program review is a continuous improvement process.[2] Regular updates and data from the consortium

[1] More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment.
[2] More information about the ISU's Race to the Top Assessment program review process can be found at: www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/review-guide.pdf.

inform the Department's support for the consortia. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the consortium must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. The consortia may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget provided that such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. The ISU posted the approved applications and plans from the consortia, including any approved amendments, on the program website.[3]

If the Department determines that the consortium is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR § 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Department used the information gathered during the program review process (e.g., through monthly calls, an on-site visit conducted in October 2011, and the consortium's annual performance report (APR) which was submitted in August 2011) to draft this report on the consortium's year one implementation of the Race to the Top Assessment program. This report serves as an assessment of the consortium's overall implementation of its approved plan, highlighting successes and accomplishments, identifying challenges, and noting important lessons learned by the consortium during the first year and key activities anticipated in year two. The report is focused on the four primary components of the consortium's activities: governance; assessment design and development; professional capacity, outreach, and communications; and technology.

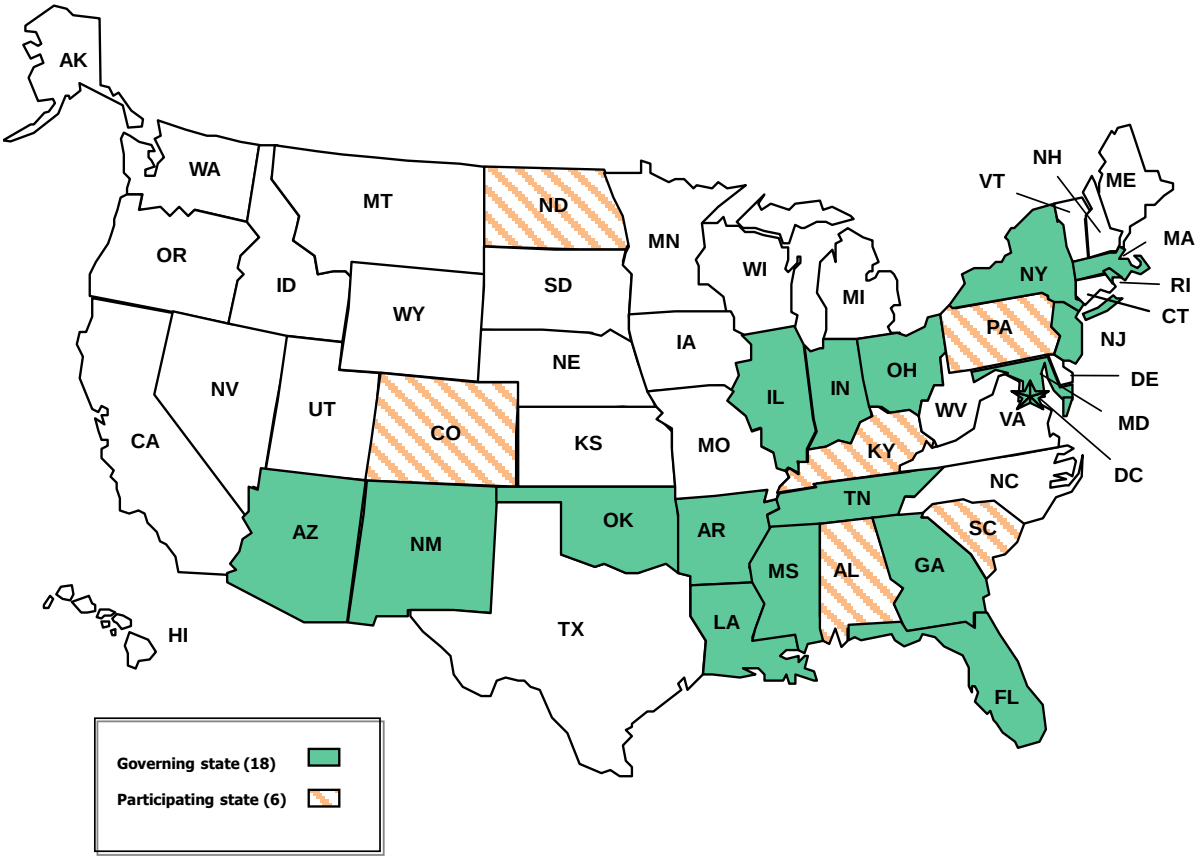
The report covers the period from awarding the grants in September 2010 through the end of January 2012, unless otherwise noted.

[3] Approved plans and any approved amendments are available at: www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/awards.html.

About the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consists of 24 states (see figure 1). The eighteen governing states are involved in policy decision-making for the consortium and are committed to using the PARCC assessment system when it is operational. Six others are participating states, meaning they join PARCC efforts without voting on policy and may also be involved in the work of the other consortium. Awarded a grant in the amount of $185,862,832 by the Department in September 2010, PARCC selected Florida to serve as its fiscal agent. The consortium contracted with Achieve, Inc. as its project management partner.

Figure 1. State membership in PARCC as of January 31, 2012



PARCC's application included a theory of action based on a state-level commitment to improving college- and career-readiness among graduating students. As described in the consortium's overview posted on its website at www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCC_Overview_January2012.ppt, PARCC is pursing five major goals:

1. **Create high-quality assessments** that determine whether students are college- and career-ready or on track to being college- and career-ready; assess the full range of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), including standards that are difficult to measure; measure the full range of student performance, including high- and low-performing students; provide data during the academic year to inform instruction, interventions, and professional development; provided data

for accountability, including measures of growth; and incorporate innovative approaches throughout the system.

2. **Build a pathway to college- and career-readiness for all students.** The combination of timely student achievement data showing whether students have mastered the content and skills in the CCSS and are on-track to college-and career readiness; scores in high school that indicate student readiness for careers and college-level coursework; and targeted student supports and interventions should lead to student success in first-year, credit-bearing, postsecondary coursework.

3. **Provide assessments and resources that support educators in the classroom**. PARCC is building:
    - model instructional tools to support implementation;
    - professional development modules to support educator use of the assessment data;
    - educator-led training to support "peer-to-peer" learning; and
    - a system that delivers student achievement data to educators in a timely way.

    In combination, these resources will provide educators with the information they need to support their students in becoming college- and career-ready.

4. **Develop technology-based assessments appropriate for the 21st century.** PARCC's use of technology will impact several aspects of its assessment system.
    - Item development using innovative, engaging tasks better approximate the work students will be asked to do in college or careers.
    - Administration of assessment through technology reduces paperwork, alleviates shipping/receiving costs and logistical concerns, and improves physical test security through removing paper storage.
    - Scoring efficiency and accuracy will improve by combining human and automated scoring.
    - Reporting student results will occur closer to assessment administration to better inform instruction, intervention, and professional development.

5. **Generate valid, reliable, and timely data, including measures of growth that can be used for accountability.**

    PARCC assessments will be designed to generate valid, reliable, and timely data for measuring:
    - School and district effectiveness;
    - Educator effectiveness;
    - Student readiness for entry-level, credit-bearing college courses; and
    - Comparisons with other state and international benchmarks.

PARCC is developing an assessment system that includes several components. Specifically, the PARCC comprehensive assessment system will include the following:

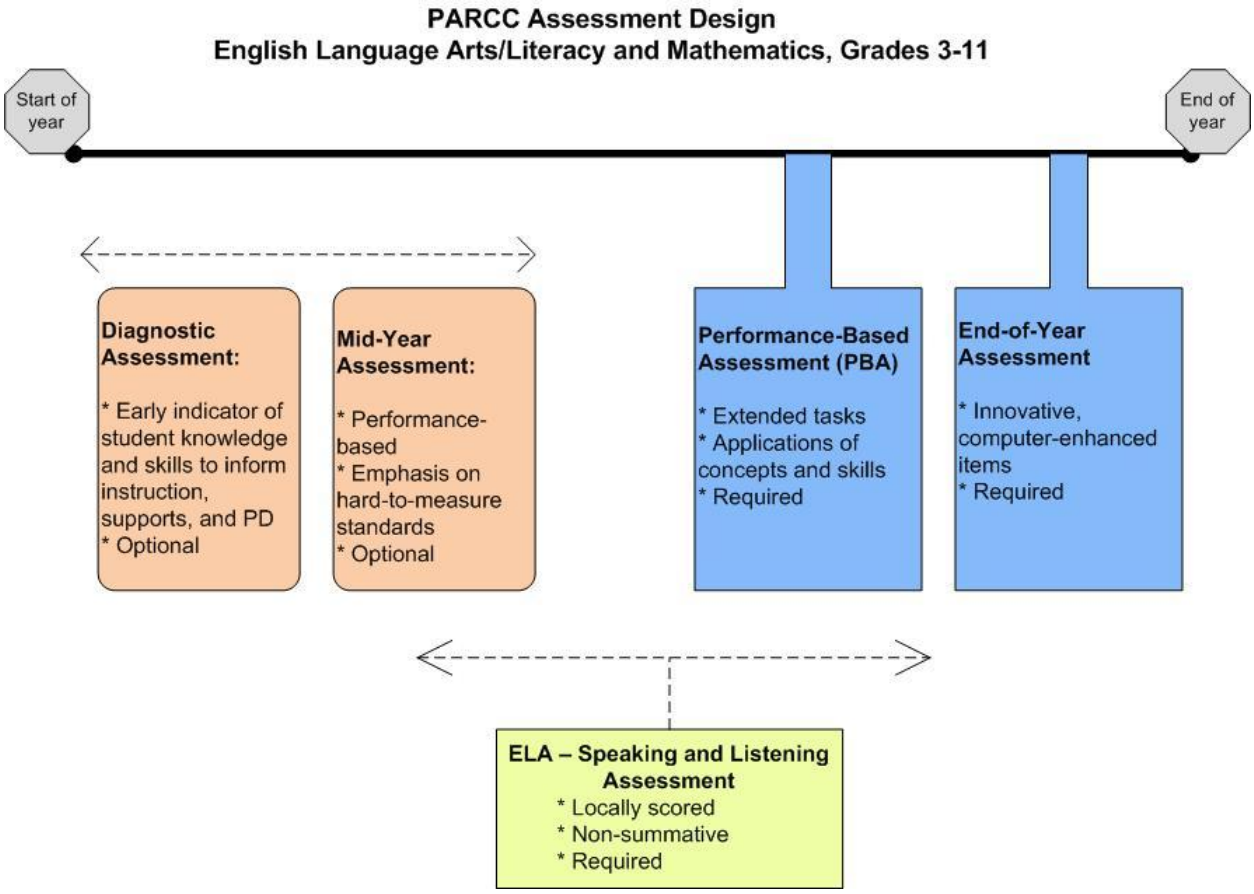
- Summative assessments that include both computer-administered, innovative, technology-enhanced item types and extended performance tasks for grades 3-11 in mathematics and English language arts;
- Assessment of speaking and listening skills that would be required for grades 3-11, though not included in the summative English language arts score;
- Optional diagnostic assessment components for grades 3-11 in mathematics and English language arts that could be administered and re-administered as needed to hone in on a student's precise knowledge and skills;

- Optional mid-year assessments for grades 3-11 in mathematics and English language arts that will focus on performance-based tasks covering standards that have traditionally been difficult to measure. These would assist students, parents, and educators in gauging student progress while allowing for mid-course changes to instruction;
- Optional formative assessment resources for grades K-2;
- High school mathematics assessments will include two end-of-course pathways: Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III; and Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II;
- Rich resources for educators, including model instructional tools and released assessment items;
- Professional development opportunities for educators through their Educator Leader Cadres, a leadership network for K-16 educators, and through online professional development modules;
- Online reporting system for states in order to facilitate secure access to key data about student progress toward college- and career-readiness; and
- Partnership Resource Center, an online one-stop shop for educators to access PARCC instructional resources, diagnostic and formative assessments, released items and assessment data.

As depicted in figure 2, the PARCC summative assessments will consist of three components:

- Performance-based assessment (four reading/writing tasks for each grade in English language arts; and several tasks in mathematics) administered as close to the end of the school year as possible;
- Computer-enhanced assessment, including selected response, constructed response, and technology-enhanced constructed response items taken near the end of the school year; and
- Assessment of speaking and listening (as part of the English language arts assessment), which will be required but will not contribute to overall summative scores.

Figure 2. PARCC assessment system



PARCC will develop summative assessments for each of grades 3 through 11. States will administer the assessment system primarily via technology with some exceptions, established on a consortium-wide basis, such as for accommodations.

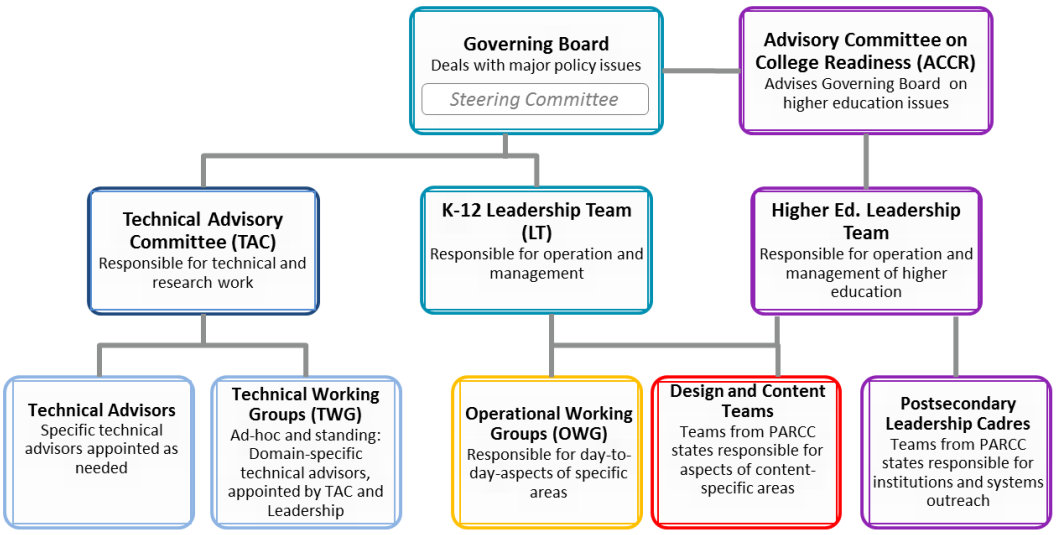
Governance

The extent to which the consortium is establishing a structure to permit timely decision-making and the efficient development and implementation of its assessment system

Developing a common, large-scale assessment system across 24 states permits the opportunity to set common, high expectations for what students need to know and be able to do to succeed in college and the workforce and compare results across those states. The unprecedented scale of doing this across 24 states presents substantial logistical, coordination, and policy challenges. To reach this goal, the consortium must practice strong project management and ensure deep engagement and support within and across the member states.

Over the course of the first year, PARCC created an organizational structure across its member states. Consistent with the governance structure articulated in the PARCC application, the chief state school officers from each governing state are deeply engaged in directing the work of the consortium. PARCC developed by-laws and decision-making processes during year one. The consortium also established, staffed, and launched committees to execute work on specific topics. Staff from Achieve, the project management partner, liaise across organizational components. Figure 3 depicts the PARCC organizational structure.

Figure 3. PARCC Organizational Chart



LEADERSHIP

The Governing Board consists of chief state school officers from each governing state and serves as the leadership group responsible for major policy issues. The Governing Board meets quarterly to make major policy decisions, including electing a chair to serve a one-year, renewable term. Mitchell Chester of Massachusetts served in this role for the first year and was re-elected to a second term at the Governing Board meeting in September 2011. During year one, the PARCC Governing Board also established a Steering Committee, comprised of seven Governing Board members elected by the full Governing Board, to make interim decisions. In December 2011, the Governing Board added three representatives of the higher education community in governing states to its body. These members will participate in Governing

Board meetings and vote on key matters for higher education (as defined in the PARCC by-laws), especially those related to defining college- and career-readiness.[4]

The consortium relies on the Governing Board and Steering Committee for decision making. In instances during the first year in which there was a change in state leadership, PARCC required and received a formal recommitment from each new administration. This ensures strong continued engagement and buy-in from PARCC's member states.

The consortium operates a K-12 Leadership Team consisting of state representatives other than the chief state school officer from each governing state, such as deputies to the chief, state assessment directors, or other state agency officials with expertise in assessment, curriculum and instruction, or accountability. The Leadership Team manages day-to-day operations and decision-making, convening weekly by phone and several times a year in person.

In addition to regularly involving elementary and secondary education leaders, PARCC has made substantial efforts to engage higher education. PARCC made careful efforts to align the work of assessment design and development with the needs and expectations of the institutions of higher education (IHEs). IHEs will ultimately use the data from PARCC assessments to exempt from remedial courses and place into first-year, credit-bearing college courses in English and mathematics any student who meets the consortium-adopted achievement standard for college-readiness. As this report details in the Professional Capacity, Outreach, and Communications section, the consortium has brought the K-12 and higher education communities together while deeply engaging each one.

To those ends, in addition to including higher education representatives on the Governing Board, PARCC created an Advisory Committee on College Readiness (ACCR), composed of presidents and chancellors of IHEs from both governing and participating states as well as from higher education associations, to address high-level higher education policy at semi-annual meetings. PARCC formed a Higher Education Leadership Team (HELT), akin to the K-12 Leadership Team, to manage ongoing post-secondary operations. This group includes an IHE representative from each PARCC state (both governing and participating) and meets at least bi-weekly by phone.

To ensure sufficient support for PARCC's activities during the life of the grant, the consortium provides funding to all governing states for both elementary and secondary work and higher education work.

STATE MEMBERSHIP

States can hold either governing or participating roles in the consortium. Governing states differ from participating states in that governing states are committed to implementing the PARCC assessment, work only with this consortium, are deeply involved in policy decisions, and have a voting member on the Governing Board. Participating states may be a member of both PARCC and Smarter Balanced but do not vote on policy matters in either consortium and are not obligated to implementing the developed assessments. During the first year, the number of PARCC governing states increased from 11, when the application was submitted in July 2010, to 18, indicating that member states remain committed to the consortium and that additional states have increased their level of commitment to and involvement in PARCC.

[4] At the April 2012 Governing Board meeting, PARCC voted to include a voting higher education representative from each PARCC governing state for key matters regarding higher education.

All PARCC states formally adopted the CCSS, the college- and career-ready academic content standards in English language arts and mathematics that member states selected and to which the assessment system will be aligned.

WORK GROUPS

To manage specific content and functional issues, PARCC convened working groups, both committees of internal (state) staff in operational working groups (OWGs) and external experts on technical working groups (TWGs). These working groups meet according to schedules appropriate to their content area, and Achieve staff liaise with each. In addition, PARCC established rapid response feedback groups of state content experts for each content area that were actively involved in the development of the Model Content Frameworks and incorporated public input into the Frameworks during the summer and fall of 2011. The consortia also identified a technical advisory committee (TAC), which meets three times annually, for expert psychometric and technical input. The work involved in operationalizing, launching, and maintaining committees is important. Their efforts are at the center of overall consortium action, serving as a nexus of on-the-ground understanding and policy generation. PARCC established 13 such groups during the first year, which meet regularly, including[5]:

- K-12 design and content teams
- Higher education design and content teams
- Research OWG
- Technology OWG
- College- and career-ready standards implementation and educator engagement OWG
- Accessibility and accommodations OWG
- Communications OWG
- English language arts content TWG
- Mathematics content TWG
- Technology TWG
- Technical advisory committee (TAC)
- Rapid response feedback group in English language arts
- Rapid response feedback group in mathematics

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

PARCC is in the process of developing a comprehensive, detailed annual and overall (four-year) project plan.[6] This will address the need to engage in multiple and simultaneous activities while anticipating and preparing for future projects. Through this work plan, PARCC will clarify responsibilities, tasks, and coordination of leadership, project management partner staff, states, and committees.

Many consortium activities depend on the procurement of goods and services. Delays or problems with timely procurement could impair the consortium's ability to successfully develop its assessment system. As of January 31, 2012, PARCC had not executed any competitive contracts. PARCC is in the process of awarding a contract for the development of an information technology architecture, through which the consortium will outline the components of its assessment system and anticipated interaction among them.[7]

[5] During year two, PARCC has also established an English learner TWG and a Procurement OWG.
[6] PARCC submitted draft work plans to the U.S. Department of Education on February 29, 2012.
[7] PARCC reported that contracts with vendors for two of three components of PARCC's technology architecture services were in effect on April 1, 2012; work launched as of mid-April. PARCC also reported that on April 17, 2012, the Florida Department of Education (on behalf of the PARCC consortium) posted a notice of intent to award contracts to two groups of vendors for item development and that final contract negotiations are underway.

The initial invitation to negotiate (ItN)[8] for this project was published in October 2011, and the proposed start date was January 2012. Assessment development is, by nature, composed of interconnected tasks. Therefore, procurement delays could impact subsequent sections of the project, such as timely field testing.

LESSONS LEARNED

PARCC learned several critical lessons during year one. First, as part of its project management work, during year one, PARCC identified a need for a much more detailed project plan. By elaborating on the principles established in the application, consortium leaders will better track progress, identify interdependencies, and anticipate capacity and needs. PARCC also developed a risk management plan during the first year of the grant period to identify the most serious challenges and develop strategies to address them. This plan was presented to the Governing Board in December 2011. Going forward, the consortium will execute against, and, as needed, expand this risk mitigation strategy. Thirdly, PARCC learned the specific steps and considerations necessary in the Florida procurement process. As contemplated by the Departments notice inviting applications (NIA) and PARCC's memorandum of understanding that states signed to join the consortium, PARCC recognized the substantial procurement effort required and began discussing options to mitigate the burden on a single state being responsible for procurement on behalf of the consortium.

Finally, during year one, PARCC identified a need to more formally support direct higher education engagement in its work. To that end, the consortium submitted, and the Department approved, an amendment to increase funds for governing states to use in supporting faculty education, coordination, and communications regarding the new assessment system. In addition, as described above, in December 2011, the Governing Board expanded to include three higher education representatives that will vote on policies directly impacting higher education. In these ways PARCC is explicitly connecting higher education and elementary and secondary education leaders and educators to ensure that the final products serve their intended purposes.

LOOKING AHEAD

PARCC will update and implement a detailed project plan and manage against it.[9] Achieve and Florida will also map out, in greater detail, the specific steps in the procurement process and identify ways to mitigate delays. In April 2012, Florida and Indiana executed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) by which Florida as fiscal agent will share procurement responsibility; similar agreements may be established with other states, as contemplated in the RTTA NIA and the PARCC memorandum of understanding that states signed to join the consortium. PARCC will implement and expand its risk management plan. The consortium will continue regularly convening the Governing Board, K-12 Leadership Team, ACCR, HELT, and committee levels as well as convening state and district leaders for Transition and Implementation Institutes (further described in the Professional Capacity, Outreach, and Communications section). PARCC will also continue collaboration across elementary and secondary and higher education.

[8] Florida procurement law includes a form of solicitation known as the "Invitation to Negotiate (ItN)." This vehicle allows some flexibility in procurement, including by permitting the state to issue multiple contracts based on a single ItN and the flexibility to communicate more directly with vendors during the negotiation phase.

[9] PARCC submitted draft work plans to the U.S. Department of Education on February 29, 2012.

Assessment Design and Development

The extent to which the consortium is developing a comprehensive assessment system that measures student knowledge against the full range of the college- and career-ready standards, including the standards against which student achievement has traditionally been difficult to measure; provides an accurate measure of achievement, including for high- and low-performing students, and an accurate measure of student growth over a full academic year or course; and produces student achievement data and student growth data that can be used to determine whether individual students are college- and career-ready or on track to being college- and career-ready.

During the first year, PARCC refined its assessment system design. The consortium also deeply examined the CCSS, the set of college- and career-ready content standards states selected as the basis for the assessment system, and contracted for the development of item prototypes. In December 2011, the consortium released a solicitation for item development. [10]

CONTENT FRAMEWORKS

In year one, PARCC created the Model Content Frameworks for English language arts and mathematics. The content frameworks, available at www.parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks, articulate the key areas of focus in the standards. The content frameworks are designed to support state and local implementation of the CCSS[11] and to inform the development of PARCC's item specifications and blueprints. PARCC developed these frameworks through an iterative process. The consortium engaged content experts in its member states, actively sought out teacher and higher education input, and took public comment before creating a final version. PARCC released initial drafts for public comment in summer 2011, and a revised version in November 2011. The consortium intends these documents to serve as dynamic resources to educators and, as such, will further revise the frameworks during spring and summer 2012 based on feedback from educators using the previous version in school year 2011-2012.

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

During the first year, PARCC proposed, and the Department approved, a revision to its assessment system design. Rather than including four summative "through-course" components administered at various points during the school year, PARCC will administer two components for summative scoring: an end-of-year assessment and a performance-based assessment. In lieu of using the two additional "through-course" assessment components in the summative score, PARCC will develop optional diagnostic and mid-year components; states could choose to use assessments from either or both of these sets. The assessment system will continue to include a required speaking and listening component, which is not part of the summative assessment score. The change was made in response to member states' questions about the potential that multiple required summative through-course assessments would disrupt the instructional program too frequently; the potential that the initially required summative through-course assessments could unintentionally dictate the scope and sequence of the curriculum and limit local curricular flexibility; and the cost of assessment in a strained fiscal environment. To address these issues, the consortium revised its summative assessment system as described.

[10] As of April 17, 2012, PARCC reported that it had issued an intent to award contracts for item development and was entering final negotiations.
[11] The Department notes that all resources developed by PARCC are intended as exemplars only and do not prescribe scope and sequence or curriculum, which are and remain state and local decisions.

The consortium's application included developing a tool to measure the level of text complexity a student can read. As part of the refinement to the assessment system design, the consortium will replace the text complexity tool with an optional diagnostic assessment tool, consisting of multiple diagnostic modules that will be available for both English language arts and mathematics for each grade level. States and districts that elect to use them may administer them throughout the year, as needed, to hone in on students' specific knowledge and skills. The diagnostic tool will provide some information about students' ability to read and comprehend complex text, and it will also offer additional content-based assessment in both English language arts and mathematics.

The revised assessment design clarified that PARCC anticipates creating high school mathematics assessments for two course pathways – subject-based (Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II) and integrated (Math I, Math II, Math III). PARCC is engaged in on-going conversations with internal working groups and the TAC about defining achievement standards that indicate college- and career-readiness for students taking assessments aligned with each pathway.

ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT

In fall 2011, PARCC contracted with two public research universities, the Dana Center at the University of Texas (Austin) and the University of Pittsburgh, to develop prototypes of innovative item types consistent with the consortium assessment design. In spring 2012, the item prototypes will be developed and tested on small groups of students, such as through cognitive labs. For example, the Dana Center has an existing on-line administration tool that will allow the consortium to test items in a computer-based environment across a wide range of states and districts around the country. Following testing and resulting adjustment, the consortium intends to make samples of items publicly available in summer 2012.

The item prototypes will be exemplar items that model the kind of innovation PARCC expects to incorporate into the overall assessment system. They will be provided in summer 2012 to the contractors to inform item development and will be released publicly for use by educators and interested members of the public.

In December 2011, PARCC released an ItN for developing assessment items for the summative assessments. The consortium expects to begin item development in spring 2012.[12] PARCC plans to leverage the flexibility of the ItN process to award multiple contracts in this initial phase of item development. The contract will consist of two phases. In the first phase, half of the necessary items for the operational test will be developed in the first 18 months. In the second phase of item development, PARCC will award contracts to develop the remaining assessment items; contracts will be awarded based upon the contractors' performance in phase one. The consortium anticipates that this will create the opportunity for both innovation and ongoing competition, as they will have the opportunity to select only the most successful phase one contractors for phase two work.

The item development ItN includes substantial information about the consortium's initial thinking on its summative assessment system, including on the structure of the performance tasks and the nature and timing of the testing windows. It also includes example items and provides examples of the kinds of student responses that are expected on the PARCC assessments compared to items that are not sufficiently rigorous. PARCC included an initial outline of the test blueprint in the item development ItN,

[12] PARCC reported that on April 17, 2012, the Florida Department of Education (on behalf of the PARCC consortium) posted a notice of intent to award contracts to two groups of vendors for item development and that final contract negotiations are underway.

released on December 30, 2011; the consortium anticipates revising and finalizing the draft blueprint in conjunction with the assessment development work.

The ItN also includes preliminary claims the assessments will make about what students know and can do. The claims will shape the reporting categories for the assessment and are shown in figure four. For English language arts, PARCC anticipates reporting a scale score for both reading and writing. In December 2011, the claims were presented to the TAC and in January 2012, PARCC held a joint meeting between elementary and secondary staff and higher education faculty to discuss the claims and college- and career-readiness.

Figure 4. PARCC Preliminary Assessment Claims

As identified in the item development ItN, for each subject area, the "master claim" is that students are college- and career-ready or on track to being college- and career-ready. Below are the other preliminary claims PARCC included in the ItN.[13]

English Language Arts/Literacy

Major Claim I: Students read and comprehend a range of sufficiently complex texts independently.

Sub claims for Major Claim I:

I.1 Reading literature, reading informational text, and vocabulary for interpretation and use.

I.2 Close analytic reading and comparison and synthesis of ideas.

Major Claim II: Students write effectively when using and/or analyzing sources.

Sub claims for Major Claim II:

II.1 Students produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.

II.2 Students demonstrate knowledge of conventions and other important elements of language.

Major Claim III: Students build and present knowledge through research and the integration, comparison, and synthesis of ideas.

Mathematics

Sub Claim A: The student solves problems involving the major content for her grade/course with connections to the standards for mathematical practice.

Sub Claim B: The student solves problems involving the additional and supporting content for her grade/course with connections to the standards for mathematical practice.

Sub Claim C: The student expresses grade/course-level appropriate mathematical reasoning by constructing viable arguments, critiquing the reasoning of others, and/or attending to precision when making mathematical statements.

Sub Claim D: The student solves real-world problems with a degree of difficulty appropriate to the grade/course by applying knowledge and skills articulated in the standards for the current grade/course (or, for more complex problems, knowledge and skills articulated in the standards for previous grades/courses), *engaging particularly in the Modeling practice*, and where helpful making sense of problems and persevering to solve them (MP.1), reasoning abstractly and quantitatively (MP.2), using appropriate tools strategically (MP.5), looking for and making use of structure (MP.7) and/or looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning (MP.8).

Sub Claim E: The student demonstrates fluency as set forth in the standards for mathematical content in her grade.

[13] In the mathematics claims, "MP" refers to the "standards for mathematical practice" as identified in the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.

In order to ensure that it is developing valid, reliable, and fair assessments for all students, the consortium created an Accessibility, Accommodations, and Fairness OWG (composed of staff from member states) in July 2011 as well as an Accessibility, Accommodations, and Fairness TWG (composed of external experts); the latter had its initial meeting at the end of October 2011. Both groups provided input on PARCC's item development ItN to build in, from the beginning, accessibility considerations. PARCC specified the importance of using universal design principles in the item development ItN. A review committee will examine and evaluate each item for its sensitivity (capacity to capture information about the construct it is intended to measure) and bias (any undue influence of student characteristics or experiences on student results). In addition, PARCC asked one of its TAC members to develop a white paper on fairness for presentation at the December 2011 TAC meeting. The white paper will inform item development work.

RESEARCH

During the first year of the grant, PARCC recruited a strong TAC comprised of nationally recognized assessment experts which advises the consortium on psychometric and operational issues. The TAC meets three times annually to discuss high-priority issues facing the consortium, and their input informs PARCC decision-making. At the August and December TAC meetings, several papers were presented on topics such as reliability; comparability; combining multiple indicators; vertical scales; standards setting; performance level descriptors; fairness; and measuring growth in student achievement. Available to the public, TAC white papers also contribute to the broader discussions in the field on critical assessment topics. Final versions appear at www.parcconline.org/technical-advisory-committee. In addition, the consortium commissioned a TAC member to run simulations for the consortium in support of its assessment design refinement to ensure precision in measuring high and low performing students (for more information about the PARCC design amendment, please see pages 10-11). The substantial expertise of the TAC has helped PARCC to meet several of its year one goals.

Achieve hired an Associate Director for Assessment Research who is leading the overall research strategy. PARCC created a Research OWG consisting of state assessment staff that began meeting in August 2011. The group discussed both the short- and long-term research plans as well as the research-related procurement strategy.

PARCC is substantially engaging the higher education community in developing its research agenda. In part, this is aimed at working with higher education leaders to define college- and career-readiness in a way that meets their needs. Through the PARCC research agenda, the consortium intends to do both long-range (post-2015) and short-term (pre-2014) projects, including, for example, potentially piloting the final assessment with first-year college students to correlate their scores and their college-level course outcomes.

In year one, PARCC initially intended to release a wide range of requests for information (RFIs) to inform its research and evaluation plan and assessment development activities. However, PARCC only released one RFI, on automated scoring. Instead, the consortium has relied on the expertise of its TAC to provide external expert advice to inform the consortium's work. PARCC also reports that the Florida ItN process permits flexibility to gather information and negotiate with prospective vendors during the procurement process.

LESSONS LEARNED

The consortium spent much of the first year of the grant re-evaluating the assessment design initially proposed. Through the original design, the consortium expected to administer several assessments throughout the school year that would combine for a summative student score. As described above, the consortium reported in its assessment design amendment request that member states had concerns about the cost of multiple "through-course" assessments, the potential that this design could unintentionally

dictate the scope and sequence of the curriculum, and the potential that this design would interrupt the instructional program too frequently. To address these concerns while still committing to developing a next-generation assessment system that provides timely feedback and data to educators, PARCC revised its design.

As noted in the previous section, deadlines in assessment development are interconnected and interdependent by nature. To avoid any additional delays during assessment development, including during the release of ItNs, the awarding of contracts, and the execution of work consistent with those contracts, PARCC is developed, and is revising, a detailed work plan.

During the first year, the consortium decided to separate the prototyping functions from the rest of the PARCC assessment development work. This decision aimed to maintain a focus on innovative item types and to provide these to the field and to future item developers earlier than would otherwise be possible. PARCC executed these contracts, consistent with Florida procurement law, through sole-source procurements with public institutions of higher education. The final contract execution took longer than anticipated but provided valuable experience for the consortium in contracting processes.

LOOKING AHEAD

One of the goals of RTTA, and part of PARCC's plan, is to create new types of technology-enhanced items to provide additional ways to capture student knowledge and improve the assessment systems' ability to measure the full range of the content standards and the full range of the performance spectrum, particularly for very low- and high-achieving students. Developing items that truly assess higher-order skills and provide evidence of student progress toward college- and career-readiness is central to PARCC's work. The Department applauds this focus on innovation. Going forward, PARCC will continue to pursue innovative items while planning effectively for testing and validation of such items.

Substantial development work is the next phase for PARCC. To keep stakeholders updated on assessment development progress, the consortium plans to release some of the item prototypes, possibly as early as summer 2012. Intense item writing will occur in the spring, summer, and fall of 2012. In operationalizing their plans, the consortium has also found it useful to convene Technical Issues and Policy working groups (TIPs), groups of state leaders and technical experts that address particular issues related to the development and implementation of PARCC assessments. TIPs convene as needed to address cross-cutting and singular topics, often convening only once. These efforts will continue over the course of the development process. Concurrent with the item development work, policy development and consensus building around administration procedures will take place. The consortium expects to develop its performance-level descriptor approach in 2012.

As PARCC begins pilot testing in the 2012-2013 school year, the consortium will gain critical knowledge about how items perform. At the same time, the consortium will finish specifying its research agenda. It is important to expediently identify the areas the consortium anticipates researching so that design principles, consortium routines, and project management processes can be developed and implemented in a way that effectively collects, aggregates, stores, and makes available the data necessary for optimally executing those studies. PARCC's updated work plan will support the integration of assessment development and research efforts.

PARCC has had initial conversations with Smarter Balanced regarding a cross-consortium TAC, scheduled to begin meeting in year two. The consortia intend the group to focus on broad technical and policy issues facing both consortia. Additionally, the consortia will engage more deeply in sustainability conversations and policy development while also working on specific assessment policies such as participation criteria. To the extent appropriate, PARCC will partner with Smarter Balanced and the

consortia developing assessments for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities. In these ways, PARCC will partner with related consortia.

Professional Capacity, Outreach, and Communications

The extent to which the consortium is supporting member states in implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards, supporting educators in implementing the assessment system, and informing and building support among the public and key stakeholders.

During year one, PARCC supported state and local capacity-building, engaged across the elementary and secondary and higher education sectors, began educator development resourcing, and communicated broadly. Given the wide range of impacted stakeholders, the consortium will continue and expand its engagement efforts throughout the development and implementation process.

PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY

In the first year, PARCC hosted two Transition and Implementation Institutes to provide intensive in-person capacity improvement support for state, district, and school leaders as they transition to new standards and assessments. To support the states' work, Achieve, in partnership with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute, also created a publicly available workbook to support the transition to new standards and assessments, which is available on the PARCC website at www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook. This document provides guiding questions, process points, and examples for state and district leaders engaging in transition work. The first institute meeting focused on planning for transitioning to new standards and assessments. The second institute emphasized communication strategies, allowing states to work in both state-specific and cross-state groups to identify best practices and develop individual frameworks for communication. States had discretion over the composition of their state teams for institute meetings; most states brought cross-sector teams with leaders from the state education agency, districts and schools, higher education systems/institutions, and state boards of education. State teams from twenty-two states convened at the first institute, and teams from twenty-one states were on-site for the second meeting. PARCC reports positive feedback from states regarding the content of these sessions and the opportunities for inter- and intra-state planning and communication.

PARCC shared its Model Content Frameworks for English language arts and mathematics publicly, both during development and, following updates related to public comment, as a resource for educators. Teachers and instructional leaders can use these frameworks in the classroom as they begin the transition to teaching to the new standards. School, district, and state leaders can also rely on the frameworks as they plan and implement transition processes.

COMMUNICATIONS

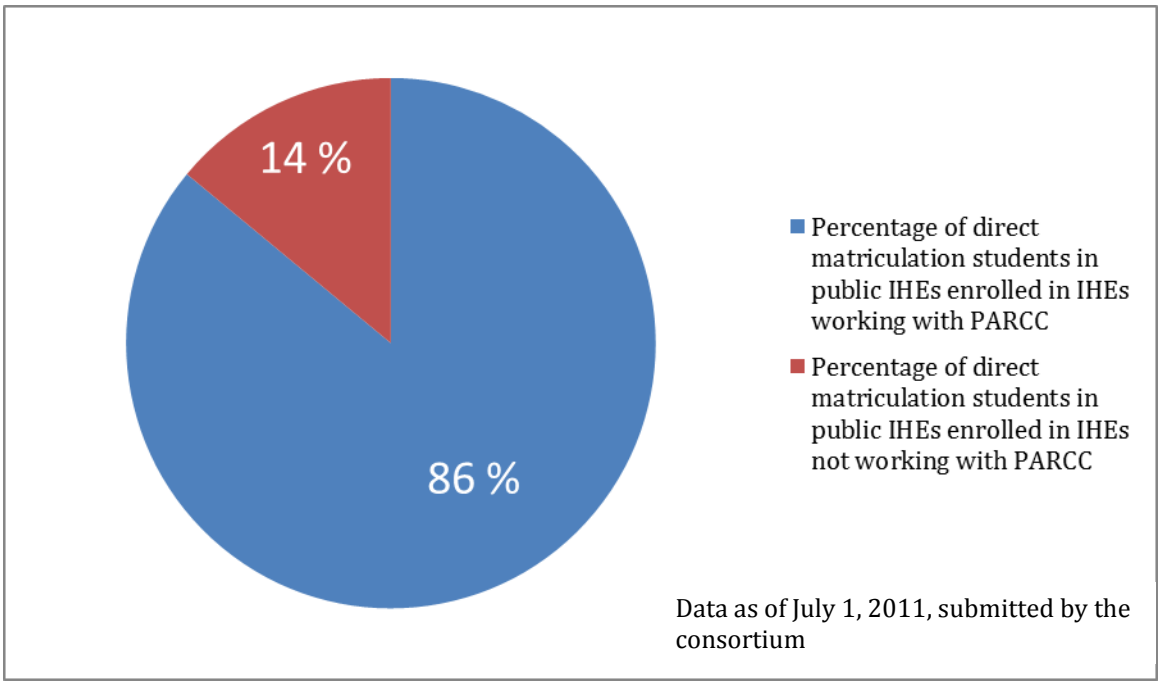
During year one, PARCC met with and made presentations to numerous stakeholder groups, conducted several webinars on transition and implementation issues, and engaged with the higher education community. In addition, PARCC built a public website, available at www.parcconline.org, to disseminate news, links to procurement announcements, information about the assessment system and member states, and other resources. PARCC regularly communicates with the general public through a monthly newsletter, quarterly updates, webinars, and extensive information available on the PARCC website. In responding to many interested organizations, PARCC provided information and engaged with the K-12 and postsecondary communities about the overall consortium strategy and activities in a great number of settings. PARCC also provided substantive information regarding the CCSS to member states by leveraging the expertise of the group of individuals who wrote the standards.

HIGHER EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT

PARCC conducted meetings in member states that convened postsecondary educators and leaders to build understanding of and support for PARCC. Data from the annual performance report (APR) documenting higher education involvement in PARCC are provided below in figure five. Specifically, as of July 1, 2011, PARCC is working with 755 distinct IHEs that have committed to implementing policies, once the final high school summative assessments are implemented, that exempt from remedial courses and place into entry-level, credit-bearing college courses any student who meets the consortium-adopted achievement standard for college- and career-readiness, which will be set collaboratively by K-12 and higher education leaders and validated for this purpose. These data show that the consortium has strong support from IHEs.

As described in the governance section, PARCC created two higher education groups that meet regularly and participate in policy development, stakeholder engagement, and public information work. The ACCR is composed of presidents and chancellors of IHEs from the Governing States, some Participating States, and from national higher education membership organizations to articulate high-level postsecondary needs. For postsecondary operations and management, there is the HELT, which includes an IHE representative from each PARCC state. HELT meet regularly by phone and in-person to advise PARCC on priority higher education issues and help build support for and understanding of PARCC among their faculty colleagues. In addition, in December 2011, PARCC added three higher education representatives to the Governing Board who will vote on issues critical to higher education.[14]

Figure 5. Portion of direct matriculation students in PARCC states enrolled in IHEs in PARCC states that are working with PARCC[15]



[14] At the April 2012 Governing Board meeting, PARCC voted to include a voting higher education representative from each PARCC governing state for key matters regarding the high school assessments and standard setting.
[15] "Direct matriculation student" means a student who entered college as a freshman within sixteen months of graduating from high school.

PARCC has deeply engaged, and plans to continue engaging, the higher education community. The consortium systematically approached this diverse community from both the leadership level, by developing the ACCR, and with content experts and faculty on individual campuses through the HELT. PARCC reports that higher education representatives have attended the two Transition and Implementation Institutes and that the consortium has received positive responses from state-level participants, including from higher education.

PARCC also conducted visits to member states to convene the K-12 and IHE leaders in the state to discuss the consortium's goals and activities. In order to ensure participation and organizational support while disseminating key details to the many higher education stakeholders and improve on-going coordination between elementary and secondary and higher education, PARCC provided funds to each governing state to support this work. These efforts serve the twin purposes of educating and communicating with key stakeholders while leveraging their expertise.

PARCC reports that higher education representatives have attended the two Transition and Implementation Institutes and have received positive responses from state-level participants, including from higher education. These have focused on planning for the transition to the CCSS and PARCC assessments and on stakeholder engagement. The consortium has solicited and taken into consideration feedback from the field, both between the first and second institute and in planning future institutes, which will continue to occur semi-annually.

LESSONS LEARNED

Through the Transition and Implementation Institutes, PARCC learned that states need specific, tailored support for transitions to the CCSS, such as tools, outlines, and templates that can assist specific planning and communications. The consortium incorporated this focus beginning with the September 2011 meeting. It was also evident from these and other state convenings that member states benefit greatly from direct interaction with each other, so increased opportunities for such work are to be incorporated beginning with the March 2012 meeting.

Additionally, it became clear in the first year that the higher education community is deeply interested in close engagement throughout the design, development, and implementation of new standards and assessments. Their partnership will be critical in defining college- and career-readiness, setting achievement standards, training future teachers, and bridging the secondary and higher education sectors. The consortium is actively engaging them through increased participation in assessment planning activities.

LOOKING AHEAD

PARCC will develop both Educator Leader Cadres and Postsecondary Leadership Cadres. Both projects will engage groups of educators by providing targeted professional development. The consortium is in the process of procuring logistical and content support for the Educator Leader Cadres and expects to launch this project in year two. The ELC will bring together K-16 educator teams from states to engage in professional development, become active participants in state implementation efforts, and serve to build capacity at the local level to implement the standards. These sessions will focus on school-based staff and stakeholders, as well as administrators and postsecondary faculty, and will provide opportunities for participants to engage deeply with the new standards and assessments.

In addition, PARCC will develop a number of resources focused on building professional capacity. For example, PARCC will release procurement to develop professional learning modules focused on alignment of model instructional materials to the CCSS as well as to build college-ready tools, including

model 12th grade bridge courses. PARCC will also continue to engage national organizations and stakeholder groups.

In year one, PARCC endeavored to respond to a multitude of presentation requests, developed a public website, included key stakeholders in its institutes, and engaged the broader field in such efforts as the content frameworks. As the work unfolds, the consortium will consider how it can communicate both more deeply and more broadly with an eye toward differentiated and strategic communication that educates specific groups on consortium issues as they relate to particular perspectives.

PARCC will continue to hold Transition and Implementation Institutes, encouraging states to select broad teams representing state, district, and school level work. The consortium will also recommend that states bring technology, communications, and intergovernmental staff in addition to policy, assessment, and content experts. Diverse representation at those institutes will create space for topic-specific discussions as well as state-specific work.

Technology

The extent to which the consortium is using technology to the maximum extent appropriate to develop, administer, and score assessments and report results.

PARCC is developing a technologically administered assessment system that will measure student knowledge and skill using innovative items that approximate work expected in college and careers. The consortium also intends to use automated scoring to the extent possible. As such, technology development and deployment is a central aspect of the work.

PARCC articulated a strategy in its application aimed at allowing the use of various devices for assessment administration. The consortium has remained committed to this "device neutral" approach while exploring related security, logistical, and psychometric issues. This is important for creating flexibility at the district and local levels to select the best technology resources for instruction that also allow for assessment.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ARCHITECTURE

The consortium released an information technology (IT) architecture ItN in October 2011. The contractor will help the consortium identify the technological structure through which PARCC will manage assessment administration, scoring, and reporting. The contractor will also help the consortium identify areas where it needs interoperable standards and support the consortium in identifying appropriate standards. As of January 31, 2012, the consortium anticipated posting its intent to award a contract soon, to be followed by final contract negotiations.[16] PARCC anticipates that the architecture development and deployment process will be iterative and agile.

DISTRICT AND SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY READINESS TOOL

A challenge for PARCC member states will be to increase districts' and schools' technological capacity. This is vital for ensuring students learn the 21st century skills they need to be successful in college or the workforce. In addition, districts and schools will need expanded capacity for them to be prepared to administer the computer-based assessment system in the 2014-2015 school year. Improving and increasing technology in schools and districts is a larger issue than for the development of the consortium's assessment system, but the consortium must play a key role to support member states.

In the first year of the grant, PARCC collaborated with Smarter Balanced to contract for a technology readiness tool. This tool will compare individual state, district, and school technology capacity to the specifications needed to successfully use the PARCC assessments. The contract was executed in December 2011, and the readiness tool initial data collection is taking place between March 20 and June 14, 2012. In order to be maximally useful to PARCC and its member states, the consortia intend for the tool to be flexible and allow regular updates from both the consortium and schools. PARCC and Smarter Balanced worked to ensure that the final product could receive input from related tools to avoid requiring manual data entry.

AUTOMATED SCORING

In its application, PARCC proposed to use automated scoring of student assessments to reduce the cost and improve the timeliness of providing data to parents and teachers. PARCC sought external advice and input regarding automated scoring of assessments by issuing an RFI in September 2011; the RFI indicated

[16] PARCC reported that contracts with vendors for two of three components of PARCC's technology architecture services were in effect on April 1, 2012; work launched in mid-April.

a particular interest in out-of-industry solutions that might connect with educational assessment. The consortium, along with Smarter Balanced, also encouraged state engagement with a Hewlett Foundation initiative to investigate the utility of automated scoring. The Hewlett Foundation is sponsoring a series of competitions to evaluate existing automated scoring systems for different types of items and an open prize competition to solicit new and innovative approaches to automated scoring of student assessments. The competition will have three components: long-form essays, short answer questions, and technology-enabled mathematics questions. The first component, scoring extended essays, was launched in January 2012 with initial results from a private competition of established vendors available in April 2012. Details of a study based on this private competition are available at http://bit.ly/HJWwdP. Following the private competition is a public competition; additional information on the public competition is available at http://www.kaggle.com/c/asap-aes. PARCC anticipates learning from this important research.

LESSONS LEARNED

There are critical technical issues related to the technology infrastructure for the new assessment system. As a result, substantial expertise is needed to plan and implement the systems. PARCC identified additional technology staff as a priority. The consortium sought an Associate Director of Assessment Technology for several months. As of January 31, 2012, state staff were providing interim leadership for this effort.[17]

LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming months, PARCC will develop and finalize its IT architecture. This will serve as a blueprint for the components of the assessment technology platform, a critical aspect of its work. PARCC will also begin building this system to support upcoming pilot and field testing. Given the time required to complete the procurement process, the consortium is unlikely to be able to wait until the full technology architecture work is complete before beginning to procure for development of components of the technology system in order to complete that work in time for pilot testing during the 2012-2013 school year and field testing during the 2013-2014 school year. Since the assessment design relies on technology-based administration, this effort is central to successful completion of the overall project.

To help states and districts prepare for online assessment, PARCC and Smarter Balanced are using a technology inventory tool beginning in March 2012. This will provide critical information for consortium leaders as well as for state and district leaders as they work together to get ready for delivering PARCC assessments. The consortium will also continue and expand existing partnerships to support state and district technology readiness. Similarly, the consortium has begun and should continue helping member states leverage the experience of states that have already transitioned to online assessment technology as a way to guide states and districts new to the process. PARCC drafted and internally reviewed preliminary technology guidance regarding minimum instructional device standards.

[17] PARCC reported that it hired an Associate Director for Assessment Technology in February 2012, and she is now leading the rollout of the Technology Readiness Tool and work with the technology architecture vendors.

CONCLUSION

The Race to the Top Assessment program was established to support development of assessment systems that better reflect good instructional practice and support a culture of continuous improvement in education. PARCC has answered the substantial challenge to create an assessment system that will provide meaningful and timely information to support professional learning, program improvement, instructional enhancement, and school and educator evaluation. Successful development and implementation will require an unprecedented degree of coordination and communication by member states across all levels of education – teachers, schools, districts, states, higher education, and local, state, and national policymakers. The Department recognizes the challenge this poses and commends PARCC for the progress it made during the first year. During year one, the consortium established a governance structure, refined its assessment design, contracted for item prototypes, engaged the higher education community, held Transition and Implementation Institutes, released an ItN for technology architecture, and developed Model Content Frameworks.

SUCCESSES

- *Higher education engagement*
  The consortium has created explicit context for collaboration on the part of higher education leaders as well as to faculty and staff members. By both educating them about the work of the consortium and including them in efforts to define college- and career-readiness, PARCC has made important strides toward ensuring that its final product is used for the intended purpose; that is, to provide evidence of student readiness for entry into credit-bearing college courses. The breadth and depth of engagement has been truly impressive, as PARCC has regularly spoken with, met in person with, and convened meetings for high-level IHE leaders as well as content experts and educators in higher education classrooms. State-specific meetings, including convening K-12 and higher education leaders at the same time, build the relationships for continuing partnerships and engagement that advance the interests of all involved. Together they can ensure that the assessment system PARCC ultimately develops indeed measures college- and career-readiness and provides needed data for both elementary and secondary and higher education.

- *Professional capacity*
  PARCC has successfully convened large groups of state and district leaders for Transition and Implementation Institutes, providing resources requested by leaders at those levels to support the implementation of new college- and career-ready standards and assessments. This direct professional development provides urgently needed support. PARCC has also prioritized, developed, and released the Model Content Frameworks to support educators.

CHALLENGES

- *Project management*
  Given the complex nature of this project and the interdependence of the work, PARCC needs to more explicitly define and to manage aggressively against specific project plans. While the consortium submitted draft project plans to the Department on February 29, 2012, the consortium must ensure that it updates and manages against effective project plans. Project management for such a complex project is an ongoing, and critical, challenge.

- *Procurement*
  Much of PARCC's work depends upon procuring goods and services. In addition, the work of developing and implementing an assessment system is based on interrelated tasks, meaning that the products of one contract impact the work required under other procurements. Given the scope of work and number of interrelated contracts that must be awarded, PARCC needs to develop clear

solicitations and award contracts in a timely fashion. Sequential completion of work is often critical PARCC to item testing and assessment design and will help PARCC ensure that the assessments it builds are valid and reliable measures of what students know and can do. Further compressing the timeline beyond delays to date could impact the consortium's capacity to apply information gleaned through this process to final assessment development and implementation. As of January 31, 2012, the consortium has not yet fully executed a contract requiring the full procurement process.[18] Remaining on the timeline for awarding contracts is critical for PARCC to meet its deadlines. Any significant delay in the consortium awarding contracts or the contractors delivering materials may impact PARCC's ability to develop its assessment system for operational use in the 2014-2015 school year, including such crucial intermediate steps as field testing during the 2012-2013 and the 2013-2014 school years.

- *Assessment Development*
  The consortium proposed an ambitious plan that included innovation in item types to improve the ways in which students can demonstrate their knowledge and abilities. Given delays resulting from PARCC's year one refinement work, the consortium must now rapidly develop and test assessment items and instruments, understanding that new and innovative technology-enhanced items will require more review and revisions than traditional test items.

- *Technology*
  The PARCC assessment system is designed to be a computer-administered system. Building such a system, and supporting the transition to computer-based assessment, will require intensive effort at the consortium, state, and district levels. PARCC needs to expand its capacity in this area, both to ensure that it successfully completes its own technology initiatives and to support states and districts as they plan and execute transition work.[19]

The Department is pleased to note that the consortium has taken initial steps to mitigate these risks moving forward. PARCC is taking significant steps to build its assessment system during the second year of the grant. The consortium will:

- Clarify project plans, including the ways various work streams interact, and manage against those plans;
- Test item prototypes and share some prototypes where possible;
- Develop items for pilot and field testing;
- Release a technology readiness tool for member states, districts, and schools to inventory the technology available and identify gaps to help states prepare for the new assessment system;
- Begin IT architecture and systems development; and
- Expand and implement a risk mitigation plan.

[18] As of April 17, 2012, PARCC had executed a contract with vendors for two of three technology architecture services, was in final contract negotiations with vendors for item development services, and in the process of reviewing proposals for vendors to provide support for the Educator Leader Cadres. Florida, as the fiscal agent, has also partnered with Indiana to share procurement responsibilities, and the Governing Board will continue to identify procurement capacity needs that can be shared across other Governing States as needed.

[19] PARCC hired an Associate Director for Assessment Technology to increase the consortium's capacity to develop the technology needed for the assessment system and to help states prepare for the transition to online assessment.

GLOSSARY

Accommodations means changes in the administration of an assessment, including but not limited to changes in assessment setting, scheduling, timing, presentation format, response mode, and combinations of these changes, that do not change the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the meaning of the resulting scores. Accommodations must be used for equity in assessment and not provide advantage to students eligible to receive them.

Achievement standard means the level of student achievement on summative assessments that indicates that (a) for the final high school summative assessments in mathematics or English language arts, a student is college- and career-ready; or (b) for summative assessments in mathematics or English language arts at a grade level other than the final high school summative assessments, a student is on track to being college- and career-ready. An achievement standard must be determined using empirical evidence over time.

The **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)** was signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. This historic legislation was designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The U.S. Department of Education received a $97.4 billion appropriation.

College- and career-ready (or readiness) means, with respect to a student, that the student is prepared for success, without remediation, in credit-bearing, entry-level courses in an institution of higher education (IHE) (as defined in section 101(a) of the HEA), as demonstrated by an assessment score that meets or exceeds the achievement standard for the final high school summative assessment in mathematics or English language arts.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are K-12 English language arts and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including states, governors, chief state school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. The standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America's children for success in college and careers. As of January 2012, the Common Core State Standards were adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia.

Common set of college- and career-ready standards means a set of academic content standards for grades K-12 that (a) define what a student must know and be able to do at each grade level; (b) if mastered, would ensure that the student is college- and career-ready by the time of high school graduation; and (c) are substantially identical across all states in a consortium. A state may supplement the common set of college-and career-ready standards with additional content standards, provided that the additional standards do not comprise more than 15 percent of the state's total standards for that content area.

Direct matriculation student means a student who entered college as a freshman within sixteen months of graduating from high school.

English learner means a student who is an English learner as that term is defined by the consortium. The consortium must define the term in a manner that is uniform across member states and consistent with section 9101(25) of the ESEA.

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust on-going teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Thus, it is done by the teacher in the classroom for the explicit purpose of diagnosing where students are in their learning, where gaps in knowledge and understanding exist, and

how to help teachers and students improve student learning. The assessment is generally embedded within the learning activity and linked directly to the current unit of instruction. The assessments are typically small-scale (less than a class period) and short-cycle. Furthermore, the tasks presented may vary from one student to another depending on the teacher's judgment about the need for specific information about a student at a given point in time. Providing corrective feedback, modifying instruction to improve the student's understanding, or indicating areas of further instruction are essential aspects of a classroom formative assessment.

Governing state means a state that (a) is a member of only one consortium applying for a grant in the competition category, (b) has an active role in policy decision-making for the consortium, and (c) is committed to using the assessment system or program developed by the consortium.

Interim assessment is the term for the assessments that fall between formative and summative assessments. They typically evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic goals within a limited timeframe and are designed to inform decisions at both the classroom and school or district level. They may be given at the classroom level to provide information for the teacher, but unlike true formative assessments, the results of interim assessments can be meaningfully aggregated and reported at a broader level. As such, the timing of the administration is likely to be controlled by the school or district rather than by the teachers. They may serve a variety of purposes, including predicting a student's ability to succeed on a large-scale summative assessment, evaluating a particular educational program or pedagogy, or diagnosing gaps in a student's learning.

Invitation to negotiate (ItN) is a Florida procurement vehicle that allows some flexibility in procurement, including by permitting the state to issue multiple contracts based on a single ItN and the flexibility to communicate more directly with vendors during the negotiation phase.

On track to being college- and career-ready means, with respect to a student, that the student is performing at or above grade level such that the student will be college- and career-ready by the time of high school graduation, as demonstrated by an assessment score that meets or exceeds the achievement standard for the student's grade level on a summative assessment in mathematics or English language arts.

The **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)** is one of two consortia of states awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness.

The **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced)** is one of two consortia of states awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematic standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness.

A **student with a disability** means, for purposes of this competition, a student who has been identified as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended (IDEA), except for a student with a disability who is eligible to participate in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards consistent with 34 CFR 200.6(a)(2).

Summative assessments are generally given one time at the end of some unit of time such as the semester or school year to evaluate students' performance against a defined set of content standards. These assessments typically are given statewide and these days are usually used as part of an accountability program or to otherwise inform policy.

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

www.ed.gov